

EDITORIAL

Election an opportunity for renewed push on housing

Announcements and rumors about the up and coming Portland election in 2012 have the city buzzing.

With the announcement that Mayor Sam Adams, an established housing advocate, and Randy Leonard, a rabble rouser on tough issues, will not seek re-election, the city now has two open seats. Incumbent Amanda Fritz is seeking re-election, but there is discord from her base in the far left that expected much more from her to counterpunch the downtown business machine. She faces long-time Oregon State Rep. Mary Nolan, who so far seems to be out-raising Fritz and gaining broad support.

We will not solve the education or public safety problems, or the massive equity gap for people of color in Portland, until housing in our region is addressed and put on the main stage.

Lots of personalities have entered the race, or are rumored for a run: Charlie Hales, Eileen Brady, Steve Novick, Jefferson Smith and others. Regardless who wins, housing and homelessness has to be at the top of the priority list for those who would help our government.

In many ways, the current City Council, led by Commissioner Nick Fish and Mayor Sam Adams, has helped keep the Portland Housing Bureau and the region's housing agenda afloat during the recession. With the council's support, they have launched a handful of high-profile projects while keeping the ship steered in the right direction — even as massive revenue declines are taking place for affordable housing and homeless services.

Saying that, the current leadership on housing and homeless issues needs more support. If Portland and the region are to build a coalition of the willing to support much larger efforts on the housing front, we need electives that are willing to understand and push for more than just the status quo. We know that affordable housing can be tied to a broad range of important issues concerning transportation, education, equity and the quality of life for every Portlander. New leaders emerging from around the city need to understand the importance of this, and help move the agenda forward.

This election provides an opportunity to tackle the tough issue of housing in the region. We know elected officials support the notion of more affordable housing. We know Portlanders do too. There isn't enough affordable housing that is available for teachers and police, much less people working minimum wage jobs or who are homeless. It's all a matter of how Portland prioritizes the issue and having the leadership at the top that can maintain a coalition of people and businesses to make our city one that works for everyone.

We hear a lot of slogans come election time: protecting the environment, public safety, the economy, better education and supporting small business and corporations moving to Portland. What we don't hear is how hard-working people deserve a safe and stable home, and how this is tied to other rhetorical and well-polled messages that win elections.

We will not solve the education or public safety problems, or the massive equity gap for people of color in Portland, until housing in our region is addressed and put on the main stage. We're hoping that in this upcoming election, candidates understand that Portlanders do care about housing and we expect leaders who will not only talk about making housing a priority, but will lay the groundwork to make bold moves in the future concerning the health of our city. Portlanders are waiting.

Street Roots is getting around

Street Roots has been busy working to help move a larger agenda of poverty and homelessness forward both locally and around the globe.

SR managing editor is just returning from Scotland, where she attended the annual International Network of Street Papers (INSP) conference. Zuhl has been working with the network as a member of the INSP's board of directors for five

years. During that time, dozens of street newspapers have been created around the globe, including new street papers in South Korea, the Philippines, and across North America.

Zuhl has been a guiding light for both SR and other street papers. Her leadership and skills are something that our entire network values. During her tenure at SR she has helped develop the newspaper locally into one of the best news sources in the city. Big love and thanks for the work she does week-in and week-out.

Also this week, SR attended the Western States Center trainings for social justice advocates, learning much needed tools to help both individuals and the organization become better prepared to do our work. We are proud to work with the Western States Center to build power among underrepresented communities and to continue to make poverty and equality a priority for our region. Lastly, SR vendors and staff will be headed to San Francisco this week to attend the first annual Homeless Congress with the Western Regional Advocacy Project. The organization is made up of grassroots homeless groups up and down the West Coast, including SR and Sisters Of The Road. The group serves as both a community organizing and policy advocacy model for homeless organizations, while becoming a leading think tank nationally on homeless and affordable housing issues. Together, we are making a difference. The idea of acting locally and thinking globally is something that is not lost on us. When you support SR and vendors with each purchase of the newspaper, you are supporting a larger group of street newspapers around the world, and other organizations that are taking pro-active approaches to tackling some of our toughest and most complex problems. We believe in helping individuals to become self-sustainable. We also believe collectively we can be the change we seek. You are a part of that change and we thank you!



DIRECTOR'S DESK

By Israel Bayer

Israel Bayer is the executive director of Street Roots. You can reach him at streetroots@hotmail.com.

LETTERS

Oregon State Hospital changes draw support for reform



abuse the hospitals. That's how we get to where we are now.

WANJERIA WASHINGTON

As someone who has seen what happens inside of this state hospital, I am very happy that these bills are passing.

I hope the patients who are well enough to get out and are non-violent (and there are many of those) are able to be released in a timely fashion, and not held there for a ridiculous amount of time while all of this is being figured out by the powers that be.

The hospital has a very negative stigma attached to it, and that is very unfortunate because the people who work there do care about the patients and advocate for them to move forward in their lives and be released as appropriate. The employees work with what they have been given by the government, and that is not much. I have lived in many different places and have never seen a system as corrupt as this one. I still find it hard to believe that a system like this even exists in this country.

I believe there are some advocacy groups that have actually made the correct treatment of these patients more difficult; but I am very thankful for those who have been working so diligently to get bills like these passed. Keep going!

ANONYMOUS

On the passage of two bills set to revamp the way the Oregon State Hospital evaluates clients held in their custody as a result of Oregon's equivalent of the insanity plea: Street Roots, July 8:

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Send letters to the editor to the Street Roots office, 211 NW Davis St., Portland, OR 97209, or e-mailed to streetrootsnews@gmail.com.

Everybody is different in their illness. There is no way you can limit the stay in the hospital due to an overall status. We must see people as single individuals and not as a whole. I know that three day in a hospital doesn't make you stable. For some, it may take up to a week or two. Everybody is different.

On the same coin, people need to know when they're stable to go home and not

CONTACT YOUR CITY COUNCIL

Sam Adams
Mayor
1221 SW 4th Ave,
Room 340, 97204
(503) 823-4120
mayorsam
portlandoregon.gov

Amanda Fritz
1221 SW 4th Ave,
Room 220, 97204
(503)823-3008
amanda@
portlandoregon.gov

Dan Saltzman
1221 SW 4th Ave,
Room 230, 97204
(503)823-4151
dan@
portlandoregon.gov

Nick Fish
1221 SW 4th Ave,
Room 240, 97204
(503)823-3589
nick@
portlandoregon.gov

Randy Leonard
1221 SW 4th Ave,
Room 210, 97204
(503)823-4682
randy@
portlandoregon.gov

STREET ROOTS' EDITORIAL BOARD

The views expressed in the editorials in Street Roots are the consensus of members of the editorial board and contributing volunteers.

Our blog and our Facebook page are great ways to join the conversation. Visit www.streetroots.wordpress.com and friend us on Facebook to chime in!